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Extended Response to Information Request

IND34468.EX

12 June 2000

India: Current situation in Punjab; reports of militant activity; police procedures; supervision of the police and avenues of redress for persons alleging police misconduct (January 1999 - May 2000)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

This Extended Response provides information concerning the current situation in Punjab, including information regarding militant activity, police procedures, supervision of the police and avenues of redress for persons alleging police misconduct for the period between January 1999 and May 2000. This Extended Response is intended to update, and should be read in conjunction with, Extended Responses to Information Requests IND30759.EX of 12 January 1999, IND30758.EX of 10 December 1998 and IND26376.EX of 17 February 1997. A number of non-documentary sources contacted by the Research Directorate did not respond within the time constraints of this Extended Response.

Extent of militant activity in Punjab

Infrequent reports of militant activities and arrests of suspected militants continue to appear in the Indian media. The following information is based on a survey of major Indian news sources during the relevant timeframe, in particular the Chandigarh *Tribune*. It is not meant to be an exhaustive review, but rather is intended to provide an overview of the frequency, or infrequency, of reporting on militant activity.

In January 1999 police in Punjab claimed to have arrested four members of Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) who were allegedly plotting the assassination of Indian Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani and other public figures, including former Punjab police chief K.P.S. Gill (BBC 24 Jan. 1999; *Daily News* 25 Jan. 1999; *Hong Kong Standard* 25 Jan. 1999). Additional arrests of alleged BKI members were reported in the period between July 1999 and February 2000 (*Tribune* 3 July 1999b; *ibid.* 20 Sept. 1999; *ibid.* 27 Nov. 1999; *ibid.* 20 Jan. 2000a; *ibid.* 21 Jan. 2000a; *ibid.* 14 Feb. 2000; *Times of India* 26 Feb. 2000).

According to the Madras-based daily *The Hindu*, two members of the Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF), Manjinder Singh Issi and Sukhjinder Singh, surrendered to Punjab police in March 1999 after six years in hiding (5 Mar. 1999). According to the report, "[t]he surrender of Issi is believed to be a major blow to any attempt of revival of militancy in Punjab. The [police]